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CAT'S CRADLE

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CAT'S CRADLE

SONGS GRAVE AND GAY

BY

H. STANLEY HASKINS

BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
1916

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CAT'S CRADLE

SONGS GRAVE AND GAY

BY

H. STANLEY HASKINS

BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
1916

E.S.

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TO,

MY WIFE

WHO HAS TRANSLATED
FOR ME THE PROSE OF
LIFE INTO POETRY

★ PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks are due the following publishers for permission to use the poems which have appeared in their publications and have been copyrighted by them: to the *New York Sun;* Munsey Company; *New York American;* The Independent Press; The Hannis Jordan Company; to *Smart Set* for "The Clerk" and "Metamorphosis"; to *New York Times* for "Abraham Lincoln" and "Nuits Blanches"; to *Judge* for "The Cynic"; to *Life* for "The Space," "Concerning Bugs," "When His Voice Began to Change," "It Happened in the Dictionary," and "The Family."

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A REQUIEM

I have read Mr. Haskins's songs, grave and gay, and still live. I come of a long lived race. We are all of us tough. I can stand almost anything. I am used to trouble in any form.

I am also shameless. I do not care much what I do. What others blush at is to me nothing at all. I will read anything: newspapers, comic sections, lay sermons, poetry, Haskins — anything.

Nothing affects me any more. I used to be sentimental. I got over it. I used to have a sense of humor. I had it removed.

Mr. Haskins has written a great book. I enjoyed it. It is a book that will live. You couldn't kill it, even if you tried. Mr. Haskins has asked me to try. I know that nothing I can say will make any difference. I believe the book will still live after I have gotten through with it. I have no confidence in myself any more — after reading that book.

It has one merit that I haven't yet mentioned. It is not *vers libre*, except in one respect that I shall refer to later. Mr. Haskins deserves credit for that anyway.

I hate to do this. I hate to admit that Has-

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kins has done a creditable thing. I may write a book of poetry myself some day. In case I do, I don't want anything I say in favor of this book to keep anybody from reading mine.

Besides, this book of Mr. Haskins is not a bad book. It is true that it contains poetry — written by Haskins — but that is not necessarily anything against it. He had to do it. He couldn't help it. I know how it is myself. He is like me. He was a good man once. We can't all of us expect to come out right.

He has done the best he could with the material he had. We must remember that.

The book opens with a poem called "Cat's Cradle." I admit at the start that, considered as an example of unheroic gasometer, this poem has one grave defect. You know what it means. That is bad. It is awful. No magazine would take a poem like that, and if no magazine would take it what good is it? When you read any poem in these days and know what it means, then that poem is pretty hopeless. You wouldn't expect a thing like that even of an insurance policy.

On the other hand, this poem has one merit, which I hate to mention; but I must be fair. With me justice is a passion. When I cannot be perfectly fair, I shall stop reading poetry even when written by my friend Haskins. The merit, then, of that poem is this: although the title is "Cat's Cradle," it has nothing in it

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really about a cat or a cradle. That is the way a poem ought to be. That is the test of a really great poem — that it shall not contain anything about the subject it is written about.

I have also read the last poem in the book: I wanted to see how the book ended. I wanted to see who was married to who (or whom) and if the villain got what was coming to him. The last poem contains a description of something I said wasn't in the book. That is why this is such a good criticism. When you can write about a book and praise it for a merit it doesn't have and roast it because it also has something you think ought to be there but isn't, then you are a book reviewer. That is what must be the matter with me. I never knew before. Mr. Haskins's book has done it. In spite of the fact that he wrote it, it must therefore be a great book.

THOMAS L. MASSON.

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A ROAST

Dear Hank: —

Together with the advance copy of the book of your verse, which you were so good as to send me here, you wrote me a letter, supplicating me, in the most moving terms, to say something insulting about your work, to grill your rhymes, to plank your Muse, to serve the bird of your high ecstasy Spanish style — *chili con sonnets*, as it were. In simpler words, you ask me to Roast!

In all my years of wandering up and down the flinty paths of song I have yearned with swollen tongue and staring eyes for the great privilege you now so generously offer me. Never before has a fellow bard been kind. All too frequently the busy employees of Erato, Calliope & Co. have hinted coyly for a word of praise. But why should I lavish praise on others when I have scarcely enough for myself? But to Roast! Ah, that is the Poet's heaven — a sort of cannibalistic heaven where one may dine gluttonously upon the crisp, brown flesh of his kind.

And now, ho for the oven! Come forth, ye imps of darkness! Muse, lend me a fork that I may roast the virgin rhythm of my friend,

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H. Stanley Haskins! Why not? Hank says I can, doesn't he? Then why pause, gentle Irwin, with a dozen tender quatrains and two or three juicy sobs all nicely laid out in the pan, salted and larded for the baking?

Ah, Henry, let me confess my weakness. I cannot roast your book to-day! Too long I have starved for this boon you grant me, too late. You find me like some shipwrecked sailor who, having remained unfed for weeks, at last bites the hand that would succor and turns away with a sickening laugh. As he has forgotten how to eat, so have I, through years of disuse, utterly lost the power of roasting. Too much delight has stricken me dumb.

What, then, shall I say? In your serious verse you have stolen the infernal fires of Dante and dashed them, seething, into the infinite ocean of Shakespearean melody. You have snatched the passionate splendours of the tropics, roots and all, and combined them, with rare subtlety, into Labrador's terrific symphony of ice. In your gayer moods you have made Life and Death your playmates, you have sawed the music of the spheres into convenient lengths, suitable for carrying in the pocket. Your elegance is classic, your virility modern. You have obeyed all the rules of prosody with an obedience which is never slavish. In delicacy you are a De Musset, in melodic quality a Poe.

What, then, is my criticism?

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I will tell you, Henry, quite frankly, as between bard and bard. The foregoing preamble you need not read, unless you choose. It is mainly intended to let you down easy. As a kindly Nature puts springs under the flower-beds, so have I devised the rhetorical shock-absorbers which will, I hope, ease the bump.

There is something about one of your poems I do not like. Please don't let what I am going to say make any difference between us, Henry. You have asked me to write a critical introduction to your book — a sort of knock-before-entering.

It is merely a Spartan sense of duty that prompts me to speak out, as I am about to do. If more eminent authorities disagree with my opinion, leave it their way, old friend. I shall go my way, a little sadder, perhaps, but bearing no rancor in my heart.

But I have gone too far now to cover my retreat. Something tells me it will be better so. I must speak the truth utterly, inexorably, just like Eleanor Glyn.

I have found a comma out of place toward the end of the first stanza in your poem "The Commuter's Chum."

There! It is over.

Very cordially yours,

WALLACE IRWIN

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CAT'S CRADLE

Littleness, littleness, how the day lingers,
Up with your hands and your tiny ten fingers!
Look at this string! Let's quickly unwind it!
Magic and puzzles and fun are behind it.
Tie the loose ends with a knot which won't falter,
Knot like the hired man ties on the halter;
Stick up your thumbs and your fingers, my dearie,
Swing the "cat's cradle" until you are weary.

See how the cradle is swaying and dipping!
What? And so soon into slumberland slipping.
Sleepiness, sleepiness, twilight still lingers,
Where are your hands with their tiny ten fingers?

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A HUNDRED years and six beside, today
Are swung across the widening gulf of time,
Yet bind us closer to that hour sublime
When first your footsteps started on their way.
How sweet the flowers to your doorstep led!
How straight the trees above your baby head!
How bright the star set in the hopeful night!
How clear the golden sun before your sight!

Did not some fragrant blossom presage deeds
That here were launched to succor human needs?
Did not the radiant sun enwrap the earth
With destiny as garment, at your birth?
Did not some tree, more gaunt and straighter far
Than all its fellows, point your soaring star?
Or throw a clean-limbed shadow on the wall
Of noble mien, with mighty thews and tall?

The world, war-wounded, writhes in sore travail,
Enduring endless pain to no avail,
While brother's hand meets brother's hand in hate,
And rape and carnage stalk insatiate;
But we, your people, scatheless in the fray,
Reach hands across the widening gulf of time,
To render homage to that hour sublime
When first your footsteps started on their way.

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IN THE NEWSPAPER ROOM AT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

With travel stained feet
  Stands the lonesome youth
One hour long
  In the library booth,
Bending, homesick,
  All the while,
Over a blessèd
  Newspaper file.
Homely old paper,
  Looks to me,
Banal and trite,
  It seems to be,
But watch his eyes scan it,
  Up and down,
Blessèd old paper
  From the blessèd home town.

Type is shabby,
  And ink is poor,
Has a colored supplement
  For a lure;
Gives advice to girls
  And hints on dress,
Steers new married couples
  To happiness;
Yet in the trite sheet
  A vista lies

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Of the Somewhere Else
  To those homesick eyes,
Of the Somewhere Else
  With its memories sweet
To the lonesome youth
  With the travel stained feet.

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THE MAGIC DOOR

I WISH I had a magic door,
With action automatic,
To challenge every visitor
In manner autocratic:
The path of enemies to block,
Yet quick to swing to babies' knock.

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THE BLIND MAN

THERE'S a sign on my chest, take heed, take
heed,
You that are blessed with eyes to read,
Turn not away from a blind man's need!

"Help the poor blind," is the placard's cry,
Are you of the crowd which is rushing by,
Nor pities my plight with a tear or sigh?

I hark to the clang of a trolley's bell,
The toot of an automobile as well.
Both sounds pierce to my pitch black hell;

One speaks clear of the city street,
And one of the country highway, fleet,
While I stand here with my shackled feet.

When I've tapped home tonight, maybe
The wonderful dream will come back to me
That when morning dawns I shall rise and see.

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LAST LOOK

"LAST look!" he cried, so often,
When the long day's play was done
And twilight closed about us
To put an end to fun.
How clear rang out his parting!
It seems but yesterday
That we would strive for "last look"
When homeward bound from play.

When all the other mourners
Had tiptoed down the hall
Today, old chum, 'twas I that
Had "last look," after all.

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THE DIFFERENCE

SHADOWS have bullied the children to sleep,
Ah, it's a wonderful sight,
Father and mother have tiptoed to peep,
Going the rounds for the night.
Mother says: "Billy has thrown off the clothes,
See how the covers have pulled from his toes."
Father says: "Gosh, that's a capable nose!"
Ah, it's a wonderful sight.

Jimmy throws one arm out over the sheet,
Ah, it's a wonderful sight,
See, he is lax from his head to his feet,
Sleeping with all of his might.
Mother says: "My, but his color is fine,"
Father says: "Wonder what this boy of mine
Will do in the world" (his eyes all ashine):
Ah, it's a wonderful sight.

Father goes down to his paper and reads,
Ah, it's a wonderful sight,
Face all aglow with his sons' future deeds,
Conquerors, both, in the fight.
Mother turns back from the top of the stair,
Takes a last look at the two sleeping there,
Kneels for a moment and whispers a prayer:
Ah, it's a wonderful sight.

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THE SHADOW

THERE's the smell of hay in the air tonight,
Blown from the long ago,
And with it a hundred minor scents;
See on the barn there looms immense
A shadow I used to know!
Thrown by a fitful lantern's light.

Joe was sturdy, his hair was red,
Hired man was he.
He'd take his fork and cross the yard,
And I'd follow close though the pace was hard,
For he walked too fast for me.
(It was time to put the cattle to bed.)

The lantern hung in his calloused hand,
Oh, the shadow I used to know!
It walked with legs ten cubits high,
I made believe laugh when I longed to cry,
In that very long ago,
And I boldly whistled to show my sand.

My hired man with the kind blue eyes,
How your shadow took my breath!
As flung by swinging lantern light
It loomed gigantic in the night.
Yes, Joe has bowed to death,
But his shadow, his shadow — it never dies!

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TRINITY CLOCK

Out of the subway and into the street,
Hark to the shuffle of myriad feet!
Quick steps of strength, or the tap of a cane,
Fragments of laughter, or silence of pain.
(*Here in my belfry so far overhead,*
I watch for the living and guard for the dead.)
Lo, in the morning, men glance at my face,
Rushing to work at a soul racking pace,
And I, looking down, have grown sober and wise,
For strange are the secrets I find in their eyes;
Eyes that are weary and eyes that are glad,
Eyes that are saintly and eyes that are bad;
Faces of weakness and faces of force,
Dreaming ambition or dreading remorse,
Mouths lined by sorrow and brows smooth and free,
Lips curved in smiles which are happy to see;
Feet straight and manful, and paths wild and swift,
All-for-himself next to Give-him-a-lift;
Pauper in money with heart made of gold,
Age young and scatheless and youth spent and old,
All in the morning glance up at my face,
Rushing to work at a soul racking pace,
(*Here in my belfry so far overhead,*
I watch for the living and guard for the dead.)

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WHY NOT?

THREE hundred years ago there fell
  In Stratford far away
A little raindrop and forsooth
  It fell on me today.

Three hundred years ago! And lo
  Again and yet again,
That drop has posed as dew and fog,
  As hail and snow and rain,
Has masqueraded in the clouds,
  Has glistened in the mist,
Has hidden 'mid the roses with
  Their petals vapor kissed,
Has ridden on the mistral wind,
  Has sat the wild typhoon,
Has glittered bright as hoar frost ly-
  Ing white beneath the moon,
Has climbed among the rainbows and
  Has rested in the sea,
Has yielded to the trade-winds and
  Has splashed today on me.

This self-same metamorphic drop
  Of H_2O (who knows!)
Fell down, three hundred years ago,
  And wet Will Shakespeare's nose.

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WISDOM

Why do we love, why do we hate?
Why do we hurry, why do we wait?
Why do we run, why do we walk?
Why do we sing, why do we talk?
Why do we dream, why do we wake?
Why do we give, why do we take?
Why do we stand, why do we lie?
Why do we live, why do we die?
We study life's problems which daily arise,
And then are rewarded by being all-whys.

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TOYS

My baby sprawls on his bold young back,
He plays with a toy of steel,
One finger proud of its new-found knack
Of turning an iron wheel;
And who will deny in Gargantuan mirth
From his crib in the Milky Way
A child of the gods revolves the earth
With a finger raised in play?

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THE GLAD-TO-SEE-YOU MAN

THE glad-to-see-you treatment
Is great for human ills,
It's better than prescriptions
And multitudes of pills.
Tomorrow, Jones may grumble
And look downcast and blue,
The glad-to-see-you manner
Will make him smile at you.
Brown may be all-despairing,
Resolved to quit the fight,
Your smile and "glad to see you!"
May cheer and set him right;
Or some one, sad and hopeless,
May seek the way to crime,
Your glad-to-see-you greeting
May stop him, just in time.
So if through life you carry
This cheerful phrase with you,
It's ten to one the angels
Will be glad to see *you*, too!

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THE PAY ENVELOPE

Little yellow oblong,
  Product of a week,
Isn't it a merry
  Language that you speak!
Food and clothes and shelter,
  All these you contain,
With some joyfests added
  As a glad refrain.
When within my fingers,
  Your thin form I hold,
I defy the whole world
  Like a knight of old.

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POOR OLD FARMER

The farmers of the United States deposited, this year, over $3,000,000,000 in the savings banks.— *News Item.*

THE Great White Way with joy is rife
  Where cutups congregate at night.
The farmer leads a quiet life,
  An early bed is his delight.
    (Poor old farmer!)

The urbanite sleeps late. You see
  His social duties make him do it.
The farmer snores till half past three,
  Then beats the morning sunrise to it.
    (Poor old farmer!)

The city man wears nice kid gloves
  And takes a taxi round the block,
While all day long the farmer shoves
  A plough, or reaps, or feeds the stock.
    (Poor old farmer!)

The city man, he rarely stops
  To think about the rainy day.
The farmer gathers in the crops
  And salts three billion bucks away.
    (Poor old farmer!)

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THE DIFFERENCE

Two houses on the self-same street
  Faced east the self-same way;
In front of both were smooth green lawns
  With self-same marks of play;

And each house held the self-same signs
  Of love and happy marriage,
But one lawn sheltered three pet dogs
  And one a baby carriage.

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HISTORY

What is little man made for?
To mock at Fate
And love and hate
And fight and sing
And serve his king,
That's what little man is made for!

What are little guns made for?
To maim and kill
And take their fill
Of human gore
And ask for more,
That's what little guns are made for!

What are little books made for?
To tell the tales
Of how man fails
Because he runs
To hate and guns,
That's what little books are made for!

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NUITS BLANCHES

The diminishing of lights in Paris houses as a precaution against a raid by the enemy's aeroplanes, is the new rule. — *Cable Dispatch.*

THE gaslights cast a saffron glow,
The ghostly tapers sputter low,
The lampwicks smolder, dimly red,
(*Beware the gray shapes overhead!*)
Lock tight the windows, bar the door!
Have done with laughter, sing no more,
For fear lays hand upon the throat.
(*Beneath the stars the airmen float.*)
Hush, hush, my babe, lest fiends that fly
Shall come to still your hunger cry.
Let grief not speak its tale aloud!
(*Black death is racing with a cloud.*)
Through heav'n's eternal window panes,
Far, far above the swift air lanes,
God's starlight shines forever more.
(*How restless glide the ships of war!*)

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THE SPACE

Whatcreaturesweofhabitare,
Dependingsoonspaces,
Thatwhenasentenceleavesthemout,
It'sgreekbeforeourfaces.

Ori fasenten cew eha vep enned,
Ap rin terth usdispo ses,
Fam ili arword sappe arli ke for-
eignton gueben eatho urnoses.

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GOING TO BED TIME

Often has my mother said:
"My, it's half past eight,
Little boys should be in bed,
For it's getting late."
How I long to be a man
And sit up like brother Dan.

But when I have climbed the stairs
To undress for bed,
And my usual evening prayers
And goodnights are said,
Oh, the pillow's soft and deep
And I'm glad to fall asleep.

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THE CLERK

My fate holds my body tied down to a chair.
The sun is bright and the day is fair.
Lo! some men work in the open air.

Some men work with their muscles taut,
My own right arm has shrivelled to naught
At the puny tasks which the years have brought.

I hark to a chisel which bites hard stone,
Who drives it thus with blood and bone?
Oh, God! for his shoulder instead of my own!

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LOVE'S PARADOX

Chapter I

He looks into her brooding eyes,
  And oh, they please him well-o.
He thinks (because she gently sighs)
  "I'm such a brutal fellow!
Here I have played a thoughtless part,
While she, poor thing, has lost her heart."

Chapter II

She hardly sees his face at all,
  She's filled with introspection,
Another subject has the call
  Upon her best affection:
Perplexing problem, she is at —
Just how to trim her Sunday hat!

Chapter III

Heart softened by her pensive mood,
  His conscience up and doing,
With righteous pride at being good,
  He turns to ardent wooing,
And says, "Your eyes show love's distress";
She starts and gasps: "How did you guess?"

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The End

"How could she thus deceive?" you say,
"For such deception's sinful, very,
A part naught but coquette would play —
Confusing love with millinery."
But though she grabbed him, off the bat,
They happy lived for all of that.

MORAL

Though joined by methods hit or miss,
This couple lived in married bliss.
Another pair make love perforce,
And in a year get a divorce.

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METAMORPHOSIS

At dawn I am the first dew,
  At noon I am the rain,
At night I am the hoar-frost
  Come back to earth again;
As dew I kiss a cold cheek,
  As rain I wet dull hair,
As frost I am a misty veil
  For brides who do not care.

Ah, somewhere in a far land,
  Where blooms the scarlet rose,
Where lilies' hearts are yellow
  And scent of jasmine blows.
By Nature's grace distillèd,
  In crystal joy I'll lie,
A tear-drop of surrender
  Within a maiden's eye.

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HORTENSE is bounded on the north
By such a pretty hat,
It seems a bit of Eden which
My eyes are looking at.
To eastward, lace and furbelows
Of wondrous shape and kind,
Quite dazzling to my vision, prove
That love's not always blind.
To south of her are tiny feet
In candid silken hose,
That carry her across my heart
In shoes with velvet bows.
To westward, sheerest draperies
In rainbow tints, suggest
That goddesses, at least, should be
Not always too much dressed.

But where to find her inmost thoughts
I hold no magic chart,
Geography does not compute
Degrees to find her heart;
So I'll explore, both far and near,
It's secret for my own,
In frigid or in temp'rate or
(Fate grant) in torrid zone.

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THE OLD HARMONICA

Don't talk about your orchestras,
  Your operas and your chants,
Your fiddles and your trombones and
  Your drums to make folks dance!
No instrument that climbs the scale
  Of "do, re, mi and fa"
Can hold a patch for making tunes
  To Joe's harmonica.

He put it 'twixt his teeth, like this,
  He puffed his cheeks out, so!
Where could you find a sweeter tone
  On earth? I'd like to know.
He "tongued" it, thus, to keep the beat,
  And oh, it seemed to sound
When that small cuss got under way
  Like angels flying round.

My little Joe was smart, all right;
  What would I give today
To hand him his harmonica
  And listen to him play?

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THE TRAGEDY

THE shoemaker sat
With his rat-a-tat-tat,
While fitting my shoes with new soles, new soles,
And there stocking footed
I sat as if rooted
With holes in my socks, blooming holes, holes, holes.
Alas, what a sin to
Look out through the window
And see Mary passing, my sweet, my sweet,
But how could I hollo
And how could I follow
With holes in my socks and no shoes on my feet?
I begged the shoemaker,
The blooming old faker,
To give back my shoes, without soles, without heels,
But though they weren't done, he
Demanded the money
And turned a deaf ear to my frantic appeals.
So off down the street,
On her dainty, small feet,
Walked Mary, sweet Mary, with swift graceful stride,
And but for the shocking
Large holes in my stocking
For sure, without shoes, I'd 'a' walked at her side.

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RECIPE

Are you timid, or are you bold?
Are you a cynic, or weary and old?
Does the world seem a hostile place
With rarely a glimpse of a kindly face?
Then take a day
To go and play —
Go and play with the children!

Look at the rain through their crystal eyes,
Welcome the sun with their glad surprise,
Thrill to the voice of the wind-swept sea,
And hark to the call of the is-to-be;
Take a day
To go and play —
Go and play with the children!

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THE EASTER OF THE LONG AGO

Easter Sundays of the long ago,
  Dream of them and smile!
Wife and I and sturdy youngster Joe,
  Going out in style;
    I'd wheel Joe in his baby carriage trim,
    At my side my wife walked staid and prim,
    Whenever I think of it, Lord, my eyes grow
      dim,
Dreaming of those Easters long ago.

Easter Sundays of the present day,
  Think of them and groan!
Joe, the fashionable, indiff'rent and away,
  Leaves his parents alone;
    So we motor up the avenue,
    Overdressed wife and I, just we two,
    Bored to death, not a single thing to do
But to come and go or stay.

How I'd love back through the years to go
  To those Easter days,
Dropping all the social stunts we know
  For old fashioned ways:
    I'd wheel Joe in his baby carriage trim,
    At my side a modest wife and prim,
    Whenever I long for it, Lord, my eyes
      grow dim,
Dreaming of those Easters long ago.

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CHILDREN OF THE DEAD

Five hundred and fifty orphan children, mostly babies, and all nameless, were brought here this afternoon from the quake area. — *Cable Dispatch from Rome.*

Gone are the hearts that bore them,
  Gone with the dead and missed,
Lost are the hands which soothed them,
  Still are the lips that kissed,
Silenced the songs which lulled them,
  Sweet at the close of day,
Oh, for the angel mothers,
  So far, so far away!

Who is to plan their future?
  Who is to teach them games?
Who is to answer questions?
  Who is to give them names?
Where winds the path tomorrow?
  Where runs the road next year?
Who is to guide their footsteps
  Up through the hills from Here?

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THE COMMUTER'S CHUM

Dull may be the morning,
  Chill with wind and rain,
You, my boon companion,
  Help me on the train,
Then with evening shadows
  Dark across the track,
Hand in hand, together,
  We are carried back.

Modest little comrade,
  Strong in loyalty,
You were born to carry
  No one else but me;
You and I are partners,
  Well we understand
That your life's the forfeit
  In another's hand.

Sadly lacerated,
  Twelve times, every week,
Punches fall upon you,
  Yet you never speak.
For a month we're comrades,
  One in joy and pain,
Then new commutation
  Must be bought again.

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THE CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Oh, winter winds will blow, blow, blow,
And what of maidens who, I trow,
Have very little down below,
Nor have that little long!

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THE FEMINIST ALPHABET

(Compiled by an agnostic.)

A is for Antis — the allies of sin,
Who scourge Suffragitis with horrible din.

B is for Ballot — the sceptre which rules,
Not granted to Women, ex-convicts or fools.

C is for Child Labor (let plutocrats gloat),
How long would it last if Mothers could vote?

D is for Duty men owe to their Wives,
To give them the vote — then repent all their lives.

E is for Equality — sought at the polls
By feminine creatures with masculine souls.

F is for Franchise —'tis plain to be seen
They'll have it, God bless 'em, by nineteen steen steen.

G is for Girls — whenever they start
They'll vote with their head — but more with their heart.

H is for Husband with resolute jaw,
Who, when you have children, is required by law.

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I is for INFANT — asleep in her crib,
Deprived of a vote through descent from a rib.

J is for JUSTICE which Women pursue;
They obey all the laws — why not make just
a few?

K is for KERBSTONE — where humble men stand
And watch suffrage pageants keep step with
the band.

L is for LADIES — chock full of hard knocks
For the masculine voter, while darning his socks.

M is for MANACLES — fetters which years
Have forged on the wrists of the Women, poor
dears!

N is for NATIONS — learning at last
That shy, shrinking Woman's a thing of the
Past.

O is for OAK — once for clinging vines suited,
But strong grew the vine, so the tree's been up-
rooted.

P is for PAPA — once head of the house,
But since Mother voted as meek as a mouse.

Q is for QUIBBLE — dare any man state
That Suffragettes do it when pressed in debate?

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R is for Reverence which decent man shows
To his charming and arduous suffragist foes.

S is for Sex — which being made double
Is really the mainspring of all of this trouble.

T is for Taxes which Woman must pay,
Concerning their uses she's nothing to say.

U is for Union — for thus, hand in hand,
Queen Man and King Woman united should stand.

V is for Voting — what feminine bliss
Except perhaps flirting, is greater than this?

W is for Woman — the Mother of men,
But without any fathers, Mrs. Woman, what then?

X is for Xanthippe — quite set, as you know,
Did she, too, root for suffrage, so long, long ago?

Y is for Yoke — such as dumb cattle wear,
Let him who'd grind Woman to earth have a care!

Z is for Zenith (no more "don'ts" and "can'ts")
When Woman will stalk through the World wearing "pants"!

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THE SUBMARINE

Milady wore upon her hat
A feather tall and straight,
A trim craft, she, and bravely rigged,
In manner up to date.
Borne by the moving stream of life,
She walked the avenue,
I set sail, close behind, because
I'd nothing else to do.
And then, like diving submarine,
She'd bob from out of sight,
But still, above the stream I'd see
Her hat with keen delight.
And thus her feather held me rapt
And thrilled with fear and hope,
As in her wake I kept my gaze
Upon her periscope.
But when at length I gained her side,
Instead of Cupid's dart,
She hurled torpedo looks at me
And shot me through the heart.

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Your charming daughter motored by
(*And just like you she looked a guy*),
She wore that stunning crepe de Chine
(*No uglier dress was ever seen*).
That velvet turban *is* so chic
(*With her snub nose a perfect freak!*)
Your dance on Wednesday? Charmed, I'm sure!
(*Those tea dansants I can't endure*).
The war's a fright — and getting worse
(*You'd make an ideal Red Cross nurse*).
Oh, no, I'm really not so fat!
(*Trust her to tell me so, the cat!*);
Yes, Ruth's still West, be sure to write her!
Kiss me good-bye (*I'd like to bite her!*)

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ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT

When looking into two blue eyes
  Which gaze straight back at you,
When watching red lips curve and pout,
  What else could mere man do?
Her golden hair lay on my breast,
  My arm embraced her waist,
Her little hand within my grasp
  In confidence was placed,
And I, fresh from the teacher's art
  In tango and maxixe,
Trod all the very latest steps
  With skill the tyro seeks.
I lame ducked first with whirl and dip,
  Then when I saw a tear
Upon my darling's cheek I changed
  And waltzed the little dear.
The clock struck "one," the clock struck "two,"
  My strength was almost spent,
Still through the mazes of the dance
  Unflinchingly I went;
Until, at last, into her face
  I took a stealthy peep
And found, oh, joy, my little babe
  At last had gone to sleep.

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OUTWARD BOUND

What of the faces, pinched and wan,
Hardened by grief, alas?
Children's faces with youth all gone,
Pressed to the window glass;
Pressed with their eager eyes aglow,
Seeking through city's din
Wonderful sign which will make them know
Somebody's ship's come in,
Somebody's ship has cleared the bar,
Anchored with precious freight,
Bringing its gifts from lands afar,
Bringing them ere too late.

Long is the wait for the faces wan,
Hardened by grief, alas,
Children's faces with youth all gone,
Pressed to the window glass,
Fairy ships may sail sunlit seas,
Laden with Christmas cheer,
With nothing aboard for such as these,
But sailing away from here;
Sailing with cargoes for Belgian youth,
For foreign people's good,
And while they're outward bound, forsooth,
Our children lack for food.

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IN THE DAYS OF THE USED-TO-BE

How well do I remember
The dear and vanished days,
The villain still pursuing
In ten-twent'-thirty plays,
Or gray coats stormed the footlights
To tune of shot and shell,
As men in blue so bravely
For right and honor fell;
Or uncle Tom and Eva
Sat talking neath the moon,
While crocodiles were splashing
Beyond the dark lagoon.

O sweet and pallid lady!
O heroine divine!
I felt each grief you suffered,
Your every hurt was mine,
So, when a ghost came down stage,
With all the lights turned low,
I had to yell, "Look out there!"
For fear you didn't know.
I loved to hear the sleighbells
And hearty off-stage "Whoa,"
And watch the Deacon enter
All white with paper snow;
He'd brought the dreaded mortgage
(I guessed it from his smile);
I wondered if the widow

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Surmised it all the while.
But none of the contraptions
To please the eye and ear
Compared to hollow foot beats
As galloping drew near;
"Galump, galump, galumping,"
How true to life it seems
To hear those hollow hoof beats
Go pounding through my dreams.
I knew just when the hero
From wounds and hunger weak
Would stumble in, right centre,
A cut across his cheek.
"Trot, trot, trot, trot"; to fainter sounds
The horse is led away,
To poke his patient nose into
His meed of fragrant hay.

No longer do those hoof beats ring,
We're in a different age,
The hero with black goggles comes
From motoring off-stage;
The man who used to work the hoofs,
He honk honks nowadays,
I wonder if he's homesick too
For home and mother plays.
I wonder if he still could make
The sound of horses' feet,
"Galump, galump," go galloping
Along the village street.

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IT BEATS THEM ALL

Chimes may ring their ting-a-ling,
  Winds may croon and sigh,
Little rills with pretty trills
  May haunt the ear and eye;

Waves may roar their wild encore
  In deep toned harmony,
And in the morn the huntsman's horn
  May wind o'er hill and lea;

There may be heard a sweet voiced bird,
  The topmost branch adorning,
But for music rare, naught can compare
  With the postman's whistle in the morning.

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I REMEMBER, I remember,
Grim temptation beckoned me,
From the top shelf of the closet,
Where Dad's pistol used to be.
In a collar box it rested,
Tucked away behind a book.
(How I loved to go and softly
Lift the lid and have a look!)
Oft I squinted through the barrel,
Just as happy as could be,
While six bullets in their chambers
Like gray mice peeped back at me.
But alas, when father caught me
(I can feel that strong hand still!)
He removed some surplus clothing
And went to it with a will.

Thirty years have passed, and now I
Have a Jimmy all my own,
And he gave his word of honor
That he'd leave my gun alone.
But this morning, when I happened
To walk softly through the hall,
I discovered that my hopeful
Hadn't kept his word at all.
For I caught the tad red handed
And as happy as could be,

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With his eye tight to the muzzle,
Just to see what he could see.

Did I spank him? Well I couldn't,
* Though my wife insists I'm wrong;
That to spare the rod is spoiling
Little Jimmy right along.
Maybe he will spank *his* children,
In a manner stern and grim,
But the lickings father gave me
Are enough for me *and* Jim.

* *Note by Jimmy's mother:*
Jim (my husband) left these verses
On his desk, and went to work.
Although women may be weaker,
Men are *sometimes* known to shirk.
I have just been treating Jimmy
To some wholesome " don'ts " and " can'ts."
And I've used my slipper freely
Where it rhymes with militants.

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UP OR DOWN?

Life is like an office building,
  Crowded full from base to crown,
Elevators, swift and silent,
  Going up and going down.
Tenants range from kings to beggars,
  Clad in rags or silken gown,
All in locals or expresses,
  Going up and going down.
In the hall, like busy starters,
  Shout the clergy of renown,
Hear them proselyte with vigor:
"Going up, or going down?"

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CONCERNING BUGS

Doctor Chapman has treated his family with typhoid antitoxin so that it will be safe for them to eat all the oysters they want. — *News Item.*

Now let the merry microbes dance
In oysters, milk and butter,
For they can crawl all over us,
And never cause a flutter;
Away with ptomaine aches and chills,
And bacillary terrors,
For vaccine will deliver us
From dietary errors.

When alcoholic serum comes,
A drink won't be so risky
From little headache bugs which dance
In ev'ry glass of whiskey;
But we will drain the bumper dry,
With antitoxic laughter,
Immune from care and vain regrets
Which wreck the morning after.

For ev'ry habit on the list
Vaccines should be invented,
And thus the consequences dire
Of misdeeds be prevented.
For debt, for taxes — all the ills
That pocketbook is heir to —
Inoculation is the thing
That nothing can compare to.

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No limits of achievement can
  Dismay the men of science,
When with their friendly germs they make
  An anti-death alliance.
Thus when X-rays and liquid air,
  With radium allying,
A serum make, by using it
  We'll put a "josh" on dying.

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THE COLLEGE WIDOW

At sweet sixteen she used to say:
"I'll give my hand to a B.A.,"
But after that, she did condemn,
For husband, less than an A.M.

Still later, she could hardly see
A title less than LL.B.,
And Ph.D. and F.R.S.
Stood forth as goals of happiness.

While high-brows came and high-brows went,
None seemed on matrimony bent,
Until at last, in grim distress,
She caught and wed a D.D.S.

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HAVE YOU MET HIM?

I'LL take a chance with floods and rain,
With hurts and hunger, grief and pain,
I'll dodge swift traffic on the street,
Or josh a copper on his beat,
I'll motor ninety miles an hour,
Or take a fence and never cower,
I'll aeroplane or auto-boat,
I'll swim, or dive, or sink, or float,
I'll hearken to a suffrage bore,
Nor bat an eye, but ask for more,
I'll listen to a father drool
About his boy's success at school.
But from
the man who
always says
"How perfectly lovely!"
GOOD LORD, DELIVER ME!

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WHEN HIS VOICE BEGAN TO CHANGE

Behold the sapling, tall and straight,
  Beside his mother proud;
The congregation on its feet,
  The organ pealing loud.
Ah, happy day, three pews ahead
  Is Phyllis, clad in white,
And conscious of her presence there,
  He sings with all his might.

To force his tone for her to hear,
  He sings with reckless vim;
His larynx turns a somersault,
  A shriek escapes from him —
A something not like human voice,
  Nor heard on earth before,
A bray! A snort!! A squeal!!! A shout!!!!
  'Twas all of these, and more.

And one who passed the church beheld
  A youth with flying feet
Come rushing forth without a hat,
  And vanish down the street.

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THE SHOW OF HEARTS

See your heart in the movies. Showing motion pictures of the vital organs of the human body, particularly to portray heart action, is the latest development.—*News Item.*

Old Mister Cinna Matt O'Graph
Came through our town one day,
He photographed us at our work,
He snapped us at our play,
And when the reels at last were done,
And thrown upon the screen,
We saw the very strangest things
That man has ever seen:

Old Mammon had a shrivelled heart,
Which had no love inside,
Sir Greed had scarcely one at all,
And that was ossified.
Young Spendthrift's had dilated valves,
While Smoker's jumped and flopped,
And Boozer's palpitated fast,
Slowed down, then nearly stopped.

Young Worker's heart was slow and sure,
And Lover's swift and strong.
The maiden's, rich with ruddy blood,
Rushed on with love and song.
The baby's heart set merry pace,
Like eager birds at morn,
While sluggish heart of age limped on,
Aweary and forlorn.

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But largest of them all was shown,
The one beloved the best,
The heart that moves the whole world's pulse,
Within a mother's breast.

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A Zouave with a zebra,
On a zero night in June,
Wooed a Zulu on a zebu,
'Neath a zingaroguish moon;
In his zeal he strummed a zither,
Called as witness Mister Zeus,
As he told his Zulu Lulu
That he loved her like the deuce.

"You're a zany," she retorted,
"For your name begins with Z,
There's another zone for lovers
That looks very good to me";
Then the zebu zig-zagged onward,
Left the Zouave in a daze,
While the fickle Zulu maiden
Sought a husband in the A's.

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SPELLBOUND

"CAT," "dog" and "tuff" are easy enough,
And only a matter of knack,
But should "exstasy" have an "s" or a "c"
Is rather a hard nut to crack.
Then some people miss the word "predujice,"
(Such horrible errors ammuse)
While some men are bent, in "embarasment,"
Two "r's" and two "s's" to use.
I always could spell, but I know, very well,
It's due to my good memoree,
As teecher would say, I was just borne that way,
It's reeley no credit to me.

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THE DREAM SHIP

SLEEP is the gangplank for me, it seems,
From the everyday world to my ship of dreams,
And, faith, as I cross it I leave my mind,
Safe with its thoughts, on the wharf behind.
Pixie and goblin and fairy and elf,
All are aboard for a voyage, like myself,
And each has for baggage, the journey to start,
A happy-go-lucky, go-plucky, gay heart.
'Tis often we sail by the light of a moon
That hangs in the sky like a paper balloon,
Yet sometimes the harbor is dappled and bright,
And never we leave it for all of the night.
The ship has no crew and no helmsman to steer,
No compass to guide from the Where to the Here
But always, at morning, our journey is o'er,
And it's over the gangplank of sleep to the shore.

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Oh, so sightly, skipping brightly,
Trim and sprightly, Peggy goes,
Gowned petitely, moving fleetly,
Dancing featly, on her toes.
Up the stairs as midnight jangles,
How her nimble footsteps dash light,
In one dimpled hand she dangles
Latest model of a flashlight.

Half way up fair Peggy lingers,
Cigarette stub in her fingers,
Pauses in sweet indecision,
Startled by a sudden vision —
Vision of her grandma treading,
Sadly down the staircase heading,
In the hallway looming dimly,
With her skirts held close and primly,
With her candle wanly flaring,
Rivalled by the flashlight's glaring,
Much as ancient fabric, flimsy,
Fades beside some modern whimsy.

There's no sound of footsteps falling,
Not a sign of voices calling,
Nor a word between them standing,
Flesh and spirit, on the landing.

Over frozen field comes straying
Note of lonely watchdog baying.

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Ancient rafter, sharply creaking,
Like impatient voice is speaking.
Naked branches, weirdly rapping,
Startle Peggy with their tapping,
Draw her nerves to taut attention,
Fill her heart with apprehension.

Ah, those eyes so ghostly pretty,
Gaze at Peggy, bright with pity,
In the painful inventory,
Seem to read a doleful story,
Seem with sorrow and with sighing
Modern ways to be decrying,
And to find in Peggy's dressing
Something shocking and distressing,
Pausing with a smile of gloating
At the filmy smoke rings floating,
Till the cigarette which lingers
Slowly drops from Peggy's fingers.

Shadows now are thickly creeping,
Heavy dew through trees is seeping,
While the Presence, skyward wreathing,
Leaves poor Peggy, scarcely breathing,
Leaves her with a mind of sorrow,
All resolved, upon the morrow,
Help of ancestors invoking,
Nevermore to take up smoking,
Never, in swift indecision,
Thus to meet a sudden vision —

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Vision of her grandma treading
Sadly down the staircase heading.

Once so cheery, now so teary,
Slow and weary, Peggy fares,
All bewailing, upward scaling,
Garments trailing on the stairs.
Through the hall on magic sandal,
Lo, the golden sunbeams dash bright,
Finding, there, a half burned candle,
Side by side with Peggy's flashlight.

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AMBITION

Some poets tune their lyres,
To chaste and classic themes,
And some indite their strophes,
To creatures of their dreams,
Some strive for thoughts supernal,
And pledge the brimming stars,
And shoot poetic buckshot,
At Pleiades and Mars.

I seek no goddess person,
To spur my willing rhyme,
My Muse is up and doing,
And plugging all the time,
I hold one dream of triumph,
Sufficient and enough,
To find an angel editor,
Who'll always buy my stuff.

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EXEUNT PHYSIOGNOMISTS

There is no definite criminal type, and it is impossible to know the various kinds of criminals by their faces. Crime does not reveal itself in a man's outward visage. A low forehead does not connote criminality, and a high forehead does not show intelligence. Such is the conclusion reached after a remarkable statistical investigation based upon measurements of prisoners in Parkhurst, England, which began in 1901.—*News Item.*

Oh, come and bring the smelling salts,
We've had a knockout blow,
Another cult has gone the way
That superstitions go.

No longer may we sit and judge
A neighbor by his nose,
Or swear he beats his family
By the profile that he shows.

No more may say: "I told you so,
I own to no surprise,
I always knew he'd rob a bank
Because he squints his eyes."

Now, when a man is starving,
And he steals a loaf of bread,
We'll know that he was hungry,
And not criticize his head.

And when a vice commission
Finds some grafting on the sly,
Not yield to faith Lombrosian,
That "his ears are set too high."

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All men with necks Gargantuan,
With straight and carnal head,
Don't fatten on child labor,
Nor corner ice and bread.

Alas, with our own children,
We can't foretell careers
By width of eyes or forehead,
Or slanting of the ears.

For now we learn the lesson
That lowbrows may excel,
While high-browed lads beside them
Are busy raising hell.

Oh, come and bring the smelling salts,
We've had a knockout blow,
Another cult has gone the way
That superstitions go.

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THEN AND NOW

In youth we placed two criss-crossed pins
  Upon the railroad track,
And when the cars had thundered by
  We quickly hurried back
With childish laugh and happy cheers
To find our pins had turned to shears.

And now we place our little hopes
  Upon the rails of Fate,
And when the years have thundered by
  We hurry back elate.
Alas, our smiles give way to fears,
To find our hopes have turned to tears.

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REQUIESCAT

THERE was a man in our town,
We called him "Shiftless Jim,"
And when his span of life was done
We merely *planted* him.

Jones lived a dull and humdrum life,
His torch of fame was dim,
So when at length he passed away
We simply *buried* him.

When Deacon White — fourscore and ten —
Obeyed the Reaper grim,
The village all turned out and had
A *funeral* for him.

But Smith, some punkins at the lodge,
Had eighty-three degrees,
So we broke loose at his demise
With A-1 *obsequies*.

Digitized by Google

THE CYNIC

What use to be a hero,
  Through worry, grief and rout?
I'd rather be a coward
  And cut the trouble out.

Your brave man holds the spotlight
  For thirty days, mayhap;
Then comes another hero
  And wipes him off the map.

Athletic figures tower
  Like Ajax on the street,
But figures on deposit
  Are very hard to beat.

Let him with mighty muscles
  With other heroes rank.
I'd rather be stoop-shouldered,
  With money in the bank.

Digitized by Google

IN 2113 A. D.

HAND in hand they crossed the sand and gazed
in each other's eyes,
And he was pale and she was frail, and both
were under size.

But he was mad and she was sad, and they'd
come to the sea to die,
For the doctors had said they should not wed,
and these were the reasons why:

Two hundred years the one-step
Had ruled the universe,
They one-stepped at the cradle,
They one-stepped at the hearse.
They one-stepped to the altar,
They one-stepped to their work;
They one-stepped to the theatre,
They one-stepped to the kirk.
They syncopated anthems,
They ragged their lullabies;
They two-foured tears and laughter,
They tangoed smiles and sighs.
They danced downstairs to breakfast,
They swayed while they were fed,
Mauricing until midnight,
They Castle-walked to bed.

At length strong joints grew wabbly,
Straight legs got out of plumb;

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Broad shoulders fell to slanting
And spinal cords grew numb,
While elbows flapped and faltered
And kneecaps bulged and sagged,
For every stride was one-stepped
And every motion ragged.

The doctors had said that they should not wed,
that the reasons were plain to see,
For it's wrong to mate when invertebrate and
each has a spavined knee.

So with a groan these two alone, with synco-
pated breath,
Approached the wave with none to save and
one-stepped out to death.

Digitized by Google

BUTTERFLIES

The butterfly is at present occupying a throne in the world of fashion, and it seems likely that the dainty little creature will not quickly take flight. — *Note from Paris.*

Upon the hat which shades your face
Frail butterflies have found a place,
And at a glance 'tis plain to see
That they are bent on mimicry.

One brings rose pollen on its feet,
But finds your lips more softly sweet,
Another's wings, from sapphire skies,
Have brought a tribute to your eyes.

Still other wings, to snow akin,
Are dun contrasted to your skin,
While golden moths which linger there
Are clearly rivalled by your hair.

Ah, would that on your bonnet I
Might rest, a happy butterfly,
Too near the edge, my footing miss,
Then flutter down to steal a kiss.

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FORGOTTEN

HE:

Do you mind, little girl, if I look at you?
For I love pretty flowers so,
And you nod your head like the goldenrod,
When the morning breezes blow.
Do you mind, little girl, if I talk to you?
For I love pretty music so,
And your voice is as true as the whippoorwill's,
Where the lazy runnels flow.
Do you mind, little girl, if I walk with you?
For I love holding hands so well,
And your hand is as cool as a rose's lips,
That whisper in the dell.

Do you mind, little girl, if I propose to you?
I've a home waiting near the sea,
Where we can sit and watch the waves,
And spoon most entrancingly.

SHE:

Go ahead, little boy, you may look at me,
If it seems very good to you,
And I'm glad my head looks like goldenrod,
Which is very nice, if true.
I am sure, little boy, just to talk awhile,
Is a thing I would want to do,
And a voice that's as sweet as the whippoor-
will's,

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Would be very nice, if true.
I should like, little boy, if you'd walk with me,
But I hold my own hands well,
Though I'm pleased if they're cool like the little rose,
That gossips in the dell.

I don't mind, little boy, if you propose to me,
It's a privilege I'll allow,
But how rude to forget that I'm on your list
For alimony, now.

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WELL, LOTS OF THEM ARE OVER-PAID AT THAT

Jones gets five thousand a year to sell pickles,
Smith earns ten thousand for pushing men's socks,
Brown draws twelve thousand for running a poolroom,
And Green fifteen thousand for selling weird stocks.

X, Y and Z are much higher priced toilers
Beyond whom rank waiters and plumbers and kings,
And over them all loom the men that are priceless,
Who buy and sell warships and railroads and things.

But what of the poet? Oh! lachrymose story!
With small compensation he must be content.
You buy all the news — and here, in this column,
You fathom his hopes and his dreams for a cent.

Digitized by Google

REEL LOVE

I've seen her dance,
I know her walk,
Have watched her ride,
And swim and talk.

I've seen her run,
And jump and play,
Have known her sad,
Beheld her gay.

I note her laugh,
I heed her cry,
And when she's hurt
I've watched her die.

She always dies,
With little pain —
Then comes right back
To life again.

And starts once more
The same mad whirl —
My little Moving
Picture Girl.

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CANDIDATES

With apologies to the late (in a manner of speaking) Thos. Ingoldsby, Esq.

On the lone bleak moor,
At any old hour,
For any old person to see,
Hand in hand
The candidates stand,
By one, by two, by three!
And their eyes shine bright
With a gray, cold light;
They smile with frozen lips;
For each sees a form
That looms through the storm
And threatens all three with eclipse!
And the cold wind howls,
And the thunder growls,
And the lightning is broad and bright,
And altogether
It's very bad weather,
And an unpleasant sort of a sight!
Now hark ye well
As my tale I tell;
Hark to the story of what befell
The candidates,
And their cruel fates,
And the three disappointments that history relates.

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And now, before
The Big Chief's door,
Where none but each other could see,
Hand in hand
The candidates stand,
By one, by two, by three!
By the pale blue glare of a flickering flame
Each one longs to be called by name.

The Historian himself has assured us that when
The Chief heard their voices he put down his pen
And grasped carefully
('Twas awful to see)
The Big Stick and grinned as he shook it with glee.

. . . . . .

'Tis early dawn, the moon is gray,
And the clouds and the tempest have passed away,
And all things betoken a very fine day.
But while the Chief his Big Stick is swinging
These words in the candidates' ears are ringing:
"Each dog, they say,
Has his day.
A harmless game I've let you play.
But you will see
There can only be
One candidate, and that one's — ME!"

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WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES

I DREAMED a dream, the other night,
A wondrous dream dreamed I,
I dreamed I cleaned the menu up,
From chicken soup to pie;
And when I reached the final course,
By creme de menthe abetted,
My appetite, right through the list,
With fervor ricochetted,
Then on its backward journey seized
With relish and delight
(From coffee straight to Little Necks)
Most ev'rything in sight;
Plum Pudding, Turkey, Succotash,
Beets, Chicken Fricassee,
Ox-Tongue, Corned Beef and Codfish cakes —
They all looked good to me.
But when I reached the head again,
Without a thought of care,
I found a tomb of soda mints
Was waiting for me there;
Right at the door an undertak-
Er waited, clothed in black,
And as I reached the clams, he hissed,
"I'm glad to see you back!"
What could I do? Where could I turn,
The yawning grave to cheat?
What else was left but start again
And eat, and eat, and eat?

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I bent with courage to the task,
'Twas death, indeed, to fail,
And up and down that bill of fare
I blazed a dreadful trail.
To make bad matters worse, alas!
I made an awful slip,
And fell into the wine-list
On my thirty-seventh trip:
Absinthe and brandy, beer and gin,
Cocktails and Dubonnet,
Champagne, Hock wine and whiskey straights
I quickly put away;
Nor durst I stop, for up above
That demon hung about,
And waited for the time to come
For him to lay me out;
Jamaica rum and claret punch,
Egg nog and sherry flip,
I drank without a moment's pause,
Enough to float a ship;
When all at once I made resolve
(A very simple ruse)
To cheat the monster of his prey,
And drown myself in booze.

I chose a cask of good old stout,
And swiftly clambered in,
And let myself down, inch by inch;
At last it touched my chin,
And then the bubbles reached my lips,

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The white foam wet my head,
Oh, rather than to eat again
'Twere better to be dead!

A curse upon the one who came
(A curse with ev'ry breath)
And woke me up and spoiled my chance
To die this happy death!

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THE FAMILY

THERE's a girlie upstairs in her bed so deep,
Hark to the wind a-croon,
She's wrapped in a silver web of sleep,
Snug in her dream cocoon:
She hears the birds and crickets call,
She stirs and smiles and loves them all,
But somewhat less than she loves her doll,
Heigho for the little maid!

There's a laddie asleep in the house tonight,
Hark to the sound of wings,
His slumbers are filled with a soft delight
And strange ecstatic things:
He dreams of brave knights on a sunlit plain,
Of fairy queens that soothly reign,
That wave their wands to banish pain,
Heigho for the sylvan glade

There's a mother of both,—hark, she gently sighs,
Kneeling beside them, there,
The long day ended, neath starlit skies
She offers a broken prayer:
But out on the field, where the wild blades leap,
Where the shrapnel bursts and the bayonets sweep,

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One lies quite still where a trench yawns
deep,
And the toll of Mars is paid.

Digitized by Google

THE CLOSED DOOR

"Shut the door after you!"
Hark to the noise,
Voice drowned in laughter, you
Call to the boys,
Call as with crash of feet,
Down through the hall,
Into the dusty street,
Troop one and all.
Swift is the pace of them,
Turned to the sun,
Merry the face of them,
Eager for fun,
Thoughtless the deeds of them
(Youth's happy day!)
Simple the needs of them,
Busy with play.

Jim was the very one
I loved the best,
Jim was the merry one,
Brimming with zest,
His was the tousled head,
Eyes of deep blue,
Seemed like the sun, instead,
Peeking at you.
Ah, but his restless feet
(Long is the night!)

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Ne'er through the hallway beat,
Careless and bright,
Gone is the laugh of him,
Since the grim foe
Shut the door after Jim,
Long, long ago!

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CONTENTMENT

ALTHOUGH the poet's pay is small,
  Why should the merry bard care?
I think it is a better job
  Than making coffin hardware.
And while the rhymester scarcely hopes
  At length to garner riches,
I'd rather write a roundelay
  Than manufacture britches;
For even if you make a wad
  And take it to the bank, you
Aren't sure the cashier won't abscond
  With not so much as "thank you."

Digitized by Google

THE ENDLESS STREAM

When I am dead and they draw the sheet
Taut from my chin to my upturned feet,
When the blinds are closed to bar the sun
From the victory which the night has won;
When voices are hushed and shadows flit
And they change my gender from "he" to "it,"
When the doctor rubs his defeated hands
And murmurs some futile "ifs," "buts" and "ands";
Before I have drifted a day or more
Out on the tide from this earthly shore,
Before grief has lessened and sombre gloom
Has opened the window and flown the room —
Bring in my children that on my head
They may place warm hands in the silent bed,
With their swift veins throbbing, although I've gone,
With *my* life that through them will flow ever on.

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MAD

A PAPER of pins,
A burnt cigar,
Forgiveless sins
And a frightened czar;
A reeking trench,
A shell-hushed song,
Mad from the stench
War stalks along.

Digitized by Google

GEORGE WASHINGTON

Too prone are we to dwell upon the great
And austere traits which gave you place so high
Above the kings of earth. Too glib our tongues
With catchy phrase of "first in peace and war";
Or else to tell, with flippancy, the tale
Of youth's adventure with the cherry tree.
'Tis thus we treat with frivolous regard
Or too large awe, a warm and human heart.
We talk of you as cold and dignified,
Composed, majestic, masterful and firm.
A passionless aristocrat, too far
Above the common mould to stir our love.
But what of Valley Forge: the winter night;
The wind abroad with eager fangs of death;
The long swart shadows of the icy trees;
The soldiers huddled in the blood-tracked snow;
And you, with tortured soul, on bended knee
In supplication to your God and ours?
O noble heart, by grief and love brought low,
Like to Gethsemane, you suffered there.

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FROM THE MOOR

No wind is blowing this moonless night,
A shutter is banging with all its might,
Nor blow the wind nor sigh, nor mutter,
Yet hark to the sound of the banging shutter!

Pale souls are looking the window through,
Are calling, are calling "We're seeking you!"
What's that? Gaunt fingers cling and flutter
And clutch again at the banging shutter.

Take them away and light the room!
Let the curtain drop in the face of doom!
And listen not to the tongues which utter
The hunger cry through the banging shutter.

Digitized by Google

THE GLAD SMILE

The gay art of hail-and-farewell
  Is magic, wherever it bides,
Yet who is the man who can tell
  The heartache and sorrow it hides?

When Jones gave my hand a tight squeeze,
  How often it steadied my course,
Some shock may have weakened my knees
  And sapped all my courage and force.

Oh, then (but too late) did I see
  He'd suffered the torments of hell,
The while that he energized me
  With his gay art of hail-and-farewell.

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SAFE

Tonight I'm to sleep
In a soft downy bed,
As snug as you please,
From my toes to my head.
I'm in a safe house,
In a street safe from harm,
In a safe little town,
Which is safe from alarm.
My country is safe,
(What could I ask more?)
From the dangers and terrors
And horrors of war.
So here I go stolidly
Off to my bed,
With battlefields covered
With wounded and dead.
Why higher is mine
Than the dumb ox's mind,
Which passes, unheeding,
The dead of its kind?

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THE MARKET PLACE

In busy marts of trade shrewd men arrange
A common meeting ground to barter goods —
Lace, gold and paintings, silver, precious woods,
And what not, all in equitable exchange.
Another institution I'd propose,
A rendezvous for enemy and friend,
A character exchange where men may send
Their champions to argue with their foes.
Could Charity, with all things kindly said
Collect'd in such a court, present appeals,
Give Hothead Temper time to cool his heels
He'd be a friendly citizen instead;
And if this enterprise, enlarged still more,
Could open branches through the striving world,
Brute Conflict, from his ramparts swiftly hurled,
Would bend the knee to peace and end red war.

Digitized by Google

MINIMUM WAGE

PRETTY, sweet, petite and neat,
Polly flutters down the street,
High-heeled slippers (thirteen per,
Still they're none too good for her!)
Silken hose of fabric rare,
(Cost five bucks, or more, the pair)
Rakish hat on curls of brown,
(Fifty beans, and then marked down)
String of pearls beneath her chin,
So demure (they cost like sin).
Gown of strict simplicity,
(Iron men were slain for thee).
If I asked her for her hand,
Do you think she'd understand?
No, my fond heart, I must say
"Down, down, Fido; not today!"
I won't risk her look amazed,
Nor propose until I'm raised,
Raised and *raised* and RAISED and RAISED!!!
Nor propose until I'm raised.

Digitized by Google

THE OPTIMIST

When you get up in the morning filled with vigor from your rest,
And of all the brand-new mornings that one seems the very best,
When you hardly keep from yelling with the energy which flows
In a stream of blessed power from your forehead to your toes,
Then you're living, man, you're living and you're nailing ancient lies
Which proclaim, in growing older all the thrill of living dies.

Oh, the way's not long and weary and the world's not old and sad,
And we're not content with dreaming of the good times we have had,
But we're standing on our tip-toes and we're singing on our way,
And it's ten to one tomorrow will be happy like today,
So let's spend no time bemoaning what we missed in way of wealth,
If we're filled to overflowing with our health, HEALTH, HEALTH!

Digitized by Google

Two on hearts? One moment! See,
Mary doubles. (*Seems to me*
Ear-rings make Hortense look fat;
Merciful goodness, WHAT *a hat!*)
Your lead, dear; yes, you lay down —
(*Everybody*)— trumps? (*in town*
Swears she rouged the other day.)
You trump spades? What *shall* I play!
Strength or weakness? I forget.
(*If I were she* I'D *rouge, you bet.*
Plain disgusting how she flirts
And she wears the SHORTEST *skirts.*)
We need three more tricks in hearts;
(*Strange, how quickly gossip starts*)
There's the odd. I've got to make
Two more tricks. (*It takes the cake*
How that woman gets away
With the men — and so *outre.*)
Made my contract! Thirty aces.
(*All those Simms have* HORRID *faces.*)
Fifty points above the line;
We won three, that's simply *fine.*
Game and rubber. Mary's deal.
(*That's exactly how* I *feel;*
Bridge is quite the only thing
Keeps us girls from gossiping.)

Digitized by Google

PAST AND PRESENT

A. D. 176

THEY built the Arch of Constantine
In grandeur on the Capitoline,
To blazon there, in panelled boasts,
Vast triumphs over German hosts.

A. D. 1916

Behold, in Rome's enchanted land,
Swift soldiers mass on every hand,
And swarming o'er the Alpine ways
Revive the hates of ancient days.

Digitized by Google

HAPPY DICK

When I was very young, you know,
So many, many years ago,
I knew a harmless lunatic,
I called the fellow, Happy Dick.
What's make-believe to me and you
To Happy Dick was really true,
But what of life is all awry,
Avoided Dick and passed him by.

But now, no fairies weave their chain
Of high ideals about his brain,
For Happy Dick has waked, it seems,
From all his subtle, youthful dreams.
No longer, spirits play their part
To lead him captive by the heart,
No longer, kind beliefs endure
That all are brave and true and pure.

For that was many years ago,
And I am very old, you know,
But proud that once, as Happy Dick,
I was a harmless lunatic.

Digitized by Google

REVENGE

Jim was a bully whose dearest joy
Was twisting the wrists of a smaller boy.
Many's the time he's twisted mine
And if I yelled he liked it, fine;
He'd leave me writhing and when I'd sob
He'd only laugh, the great big slob!

We're man-grown, now, too old to play,
But I twisted his wrists, well, yesterday;
He lost a cool million (Gee, I was glad!)
'Cause I said, "No," to him, by gad.
I left him writhing, you should hear him sob,
But I said "Ha, Ha!"— the great big slob!

The last few lines, I'll admit, are bunk,
But when I grow up I will soon get hunk;
I'll have him cornered in a money deal,
Then twist his wrists to hear him squeal.
Here he comes now, I'll beat it quick,
The great big bully! He makes me sick!

Digitized by Google

THE ROSE

Hippity hop, clippity clop,
Awkwardly he strolls,
Turned-in feet, down the street,
'Mong ten thousand souls,
Bends his gaze in a haze,
Smiles with senile glee,
Let him pass, a fool, alas!
Marked for sympathy.

What is that? In battered hat
He has stuck a rose —
Jaunty thing seems to bring
Grace to pigeon-toes;
Seems like light bursting bright
From a kinder land,
Where, maybe, equally
Fools and wise men stand.

Digitized by Google

THE RULING PASSION

Father once showed off his hopeful,
Pressed him to recite and sing,
Then sat back and proudly whispered:
"Isn't he the clever thing?"
Johnny's in the discard, now'days,
See him in the corner pout!
He's forsaken and forgotten
When the graphophone is out.

Sister Anna played pianner,
With a strong and ruthless touch,
She's Exhibit A, no longer,
And she's not performing much;
You will find her, lone and shrinking,
Almost hidden out of sight,
She's forgot. Her parents play the
Graphophone with all their might.

Noon and midnight, morn and ev'ning,
See the old folks leap and frisk,
Spending all their long-saved money
On the very latest disc.
When at last they cross the river,
Headed for celestial zone,
In the boat I bet they'll play glad
Records on the graphophone.

Digitized by Google

TESTY TESTIMONIALS

I've used Blank's soap for thirty years,
In every sort of weather,
I find it makes my hands and face
As smooth and soft as — leather,
When I began to lose my hair,
You bet I was appalled,
I used A's tonic and today
Observe! I am quite bald.
To X's Dental Cream I turned,
By friends' advices led,
I've used it till I haven't, now,
A whole tooth in my head.
When at the end they call my pals
Around my bier to sit,
Though bang-up coffin I may have,
I'll bet the thing won't fit.

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JUMPING JACKS

The Jumping Jack is laid to rest,
His painted smile has flown,
Full wearily he bows his head
And sheds his tears alone;
Forgotten in the corner, now,
His oft repeated trick
Of sliding up and sliding down
The well-belovèd stick.
So often in the happy Past,
He strove to leap on high,
(For even Jumping Jacks aspire
To bump against the sky)
Or tried to slide the whole way down
To rouse the children's mirth,
But never could he plant his feet
Upon the distant earth.

There is a moral in these lines,
Let all good folks attend —
We're sliding up and down a stick
And will be to the end.

747513

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GHOSTS IN THE SNOW

Two hundred German volunteers, covering their uniforms with sheets so they would not make such good targets against the snow, crept up to the French trenches. — *News Item.*

TELL me, sentry, are those ghosts,
  Stealing through the snow,
Pale recruits from slaughtered hosts,
  Risen from below?
Where the trees cast shadows swart,
  Come the newly dead,
Back and forth like wraiths at sport,
  With uneven tread?

Hear the wind sob o'er the trench,
  Plaintive with its sorrow!
At the sound brave soldiers blench,
  Thinking of the morrow.
See the pale ghosts, swift and dumb!
  What are those alarms?
God, they're Germans, on they come!
  Quick! To arms, to arms!!

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KINDRED SOLES

Five thousand steps, a day, I take
As back and forth I walk,
Two thousand times, at least, each day,
I move my lips to talk;

But steps not taken at your side,
Make awful lonesome walking,
And words not framed for you to hear
Seem mighty dreary talking.

Digitized by Google

DESERTS

THERE'S the desert of the land,
  But it finds earth's rim,
There's a desert of the sea,
  But it finds shores dim,
There's a desert of the air,
  But who can tell
Where its boundaries touch —
  Is it Heav'n or Hell?

There's a desert of the mind,
  But it finds the brain,
There's a desert of the heart,
  But it finds grim pain,
There's a desert of the soul,
  But who can tell
Where its boundaries touch —
  Is it Heav'n or Hell?

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EMANCIPATION

Oh, who will can the Cupid lips,
The cheek of peach-blown glow,
The lissome robertchambers hips
With knock-kneed slouch below,
That dominate the cover scene
Of ultra-modern magazine?

Somewhere in this wide world of brains,
An editor must dwell,
Who, one glad day, will take the pains
To please subscribers well
By printing on his magazine
The homeliest woman ever seen.

Digitized by Google

MALCONTENTED

When the weather's cool,
We call heat nice,
But when it's hot,
We yell for ice,
And when it's clear:
"The grass needs rain,"
Yet stormy days
Give us a pain.
We must concede
It's tommy-rot
To love the thing
Which we have not,
And yet there is
No argument
But that progress comes
From discontent,
That what man wins,
Who is no wailer,
Is fat men's sizes
From his tailor.

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AT THE GATES

When War first loosed its slimy coils
To strangle peace and love,
We dreaded deeds of violence from
The airships up above;
But now we shrink from ghastly tales
Of grim, unhallowed scenes
Which follow murderous attacks
Of reptile submarines.

Perhaps the airships, near the gates
Of Heaven's crystal streets,
Are upward drawn beneath the sun
From Earth's uncouth defeats,
While submarines mid carmine waves
Their horrid tasks love well,
As, dropping into silent deeps,
They bump the gates of hell.

Digitized by Google

MAN, THE REACTIONARY

MEN still fight with all their might,
  Brothers' life-blood spilling,
Day and night take fierce delight,
  Maiming, slashing, killing;
Hear them prate at a great rate,
  With no diminution,
Claim, elate, man's high estate,
  Comes from evolution.

(*Wolf and house-dog, tiger, cat!*
Wonder what you think of that?)

House-dogs, say the wights astute,
From the wolf did evolute,
Purring tabbies by the fire
Are but tigers, summoned higher,
Having learned that gentle ways
Lead to calm and peaceful days.
Man, alone, stands fixed and grim,
No improvement comes to him.
Æons have passed but still, today,
Lo, he fights the same old way;
Seems by disposition fated
Not to be domesticated,
Never to make contribution
To the scheme of evolution.

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AS HIGHWAYMEN SEEM IN AN OVERFED DREAM

HALT! Who goes there
In the wind and the rain,
His pulses a-tingle,
A stranger to pain,
With eye clear and sparkling,
With step light and fleet,
With profitable purpose
At the end of the street?
Halt, or I'll fire!
Your hands up, just so!
I'm going to rob you
I'll have you to know.
So off with that overcoat,
Fur-lined and warm,
A cripple is dying
Tonight, in the storm.
Those gloves now! Don't whimper
(A big man like you!)
The hands of a starved child
Are frost-bit and blue.
The rest of your clothing?
This time it remains,
But here is a lancet
To open your veins.
Don't shudder and quiver
And tremble and quake
And weep for the pint

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Of blood I must take;
You've fed and enriched it
For years, I can tell,
But a woman is sick
Whom your blood will make well.
Good-night now. I'm sorry
You're chilly and weak,
Outraged, too astonished
To protest or speak.
The next time we meet,
Just to even the score,
I'll borrow your comforts
For a decade, or more;
I'll swap your bright eyes
For a pair old and dim,
I'll barter your soft hands
For callouses grim,
Your step, self-reliant,
I'll slow to a pace
Which will leave you to hobble
Behind in the race;
And then, when you see men
As proud and as far
Above your new orbit
As a cold, distant star,
You'll think of the dead past
And humbly you'll pray
For the comforts you take
As your just due, today.

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THE SABBATH NIGHT BELLS

O BELLS which rang with tender stress on ears
Of my glad boyhood, gone these many years,
Such Sabbath message takes melodious flight
To seek me out across the crowded night.
The hour is dense with gentle memories
Which stir like fallen leaves beneath the breeze,
Or fly like spindrift on the winter shore,
Cast from the wide seas of the Nevermore.
In an instant's space, behold a picture fleeting
Comes clearly back to me: see, in prayer meeting
I wait, nerves taut, with rapt and boyish vim,
To take part in the last announcèd hymn.
The organ plays a rambling prelude through,
By heavenly chance I'm sitting next to Sue,
When, bringing all my force of will to bear,
I whisper: "Here's my hymn-book! Won't you share?"
Why, when sweet voices filled the room with praise,
Did mine, despite endeavors, fail to raise
A tone to join the rest? Why did my heart
Threaten to leap and tear my throat apart?
Why was my mouth, which sang no word, so dry?
Why did the hymnal shake before my eye?

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Why did my arm, to finger-tips, turn numb?
The answer: neath the book I *touched her thumb!*
O bells which rang with tender stress on ears
Of my glad boyhood, gone these many years,
Such Sabbath message takes melodious flight
To soothe my heart across the wounded night.

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SMALL GROCERIES

My eyes are gimlets.
They bore deep into your
Wooden soul,
Scattering shavings and
Sawdust!
How dry are the shavings with
No heart's blood upon them!

Beware!
My eyes will
Flash loathing
Instead of love;
They will become rapiers
Instead of gimlets.

Then will I penetrate
Your nature
Like a grocer
Sampling butter,
And all your
Rancidity
I shall
Advertise
For
Very
Hatred!

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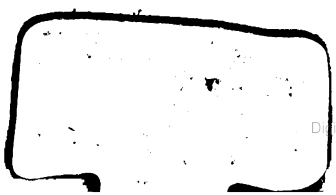

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